

COMMENTS ON THE SOITEC SOLAR DRAFT PEIR

March 2, 2014

To:

Robert Hingtgen

County of San Diego

Department of Planning and Development Services

5510 Overland Ave. Suite 110

San Diego, CA 92123

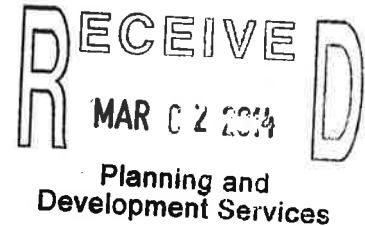
Robert.Hingtgen@sdcounty.ca.gov

From:

Carolyn Allen

P.O. Box 301

Brawley, CA 92227



Mr. Hingtgen,

I oppose Soitec Solar's four Boulevard projects as well as the Los Robles Solar alternate sites. I support the NO PROJECT alternative.

I am an Imperial Valley resident so I have seen the problems caused by large remote solar facilities placed in the Valley in recent years (problems including but not limited to invasive power lines and infrastructure, additional heat generated by solar panels, high traffic impacts to small rural roads creating dangerous conditions, excessive vibrations and noise during construction, new intrusive light sources, the spoiling of our open rural areas by these ugly industrial solar monstrosities as well as many of the other concerns listed below that negatively impact local residents , wildlife and environment).

Over the years I have enjoyed spending time outdoors in the Boulevard area. So I understand how important it is to save this wonderful region from these destructive projects. This industrial solar will ruin the quality of life in these rural open spaces.

There is no need to destroy San Diego's beautiful back country in the pursuit of "green" energy. Point of use power generation is a far better choice (eg. rooftop solar). San Diego still has an abundance of rooftop space suitable for solar installation.¹

¹ http://www.sandiego.edu/documents/epic/060309_ASESPVPotentialPaperFINAL_000.pdf

Below is a partial list of items not adequately addressed by the Draft PEIR and reasons I oppose the Soitec Projects:

- 1) WATER - Soitec projects present a danger to water sources in the vicinity due to possible overdraft, contamination and damage to aquifers and wells. This area is dependent on its local sources of water. An ECO Report article by Mariam Raftery and Roy L.Hales dated Feb. 9, 2014 and entitled "San Diego: Does Boulevard Have Enough Water For Soitec's Solar Projects?" points out many concerns.² See also the study done by Victor M. Ponce entitled "Impacts of Soitec Solar Projects on Boulevard and Surrounding Communities, San Diego, California" and dated Nov. 15, 2013 and referenced in the above ECO Report article.
- 2) FIRE – The projects pose an increased risk for fires in a region that can be devastated by wildfires. An example of wildfire danger in the back county area is the Shockey Fire in 2012 near Boulevard where one person was killed and about 25 structures were destroyed.³ The Cedar Fire is another example. It should also be noted here that "SDG&E has acknowledged that sparking power lines started the Witch Creek fire near Santa Ysabel and the smaller Guejito fire in the San Pasqual Valley that would eventually merge with Witch Creek."⁴ These proposed projects involve many possible ignition sources. The projects pose an increased risk for fire fighters and if built will be an impediment to fighting wildfires. Fire insurance rates for locals could increase because of the risks posed by the projects.
- 3) Soitec's modules planned for use are excessively large, experimental and very costly. They will be too close to homes.
- 4) DUST – Dust will be generated during construction and while the facilities are operating. The solar projects built in the south end of the Imperial Valley created tremendous amounts of dust during construction. The dust suppressants used also come with a whole slew of problems and pose risks to the environment.
- 5) GLARE NOISE & HEAT – The Projects will create glare, noise, and possible heat island effects that could bother or harm neighbors, animals and birds. Birds are being injured and killed by some solar projects. The draft PEIR does not adequately address these issues.
- 6) The Soitec Projects could cause health problems from EMF, stray voltage and dirty electricity.
- 7) The judicial fast-tracking of the Soitec's solar projects under AB900 has been ruled unconstitutional and therefore the projects should be stopped.
- 8) These Soitec Projects will disproportionately adversely affect this rural low income area. Was the area purposely targeted by developers because it was a low income area and rural? Also the local residents will be forced to suffer from all of the significant negative impacts while other people living outside of the area will receive the benefit of the power from the projects.

² <http://www.theecoreport.com/green-blogs/area/usa/california/san-diego/san-diego-does-boulevard-have-enough-water-for-soitecs-solar-projects/>

³ http://cdfdata.fire.ca.gov/incidents/incidents_details_info?incident_id=754

⁴ <http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2014/Feb/14/fires-witch-creek-gas-electric-lawsuits/>

9) The Projects will cause a loss of property value, quality of life, scenic views, recreational areas, wildlife and wildlife habitat.

10) Solar is an intermittent and less reliable source of energy. The Soitec projects could contribute to surges, brownouts or loss of power. Solar projects also require back-up energy for balancing which must be adequately considered.

11) There will be a loss of electricity travelling long distances from these remote sites. This is another reason the Boulevard area is a bad site choice.

12) It should be taken into consideration that renewable energy projects such as the proposed Soitec Projects often result in increased energy rates for the consumers.

13) The cumulative impacts to this region from so many energy generating and infrastructure projects must be taken into account.

14) A lot of trash is generated during the construction phase and the decommissioning of solar projects such as this. Has the impact to dumps been sufficiently analyzed?

15) I oppose the amending of the Boulevard Community Plan and removing the agricultural preserve.

16) The proposed Soitec Projects do not comply with the area's Community Plan.

Once again I urge you to oppose all Soitec Solar's Boulevard sites and the Los Robles Solar alternate sites. I strongly advocate the NO PROJECT alternative.

Thank you,

Carolyn Allen

